30 august 2000 • issue ten • version 6.1

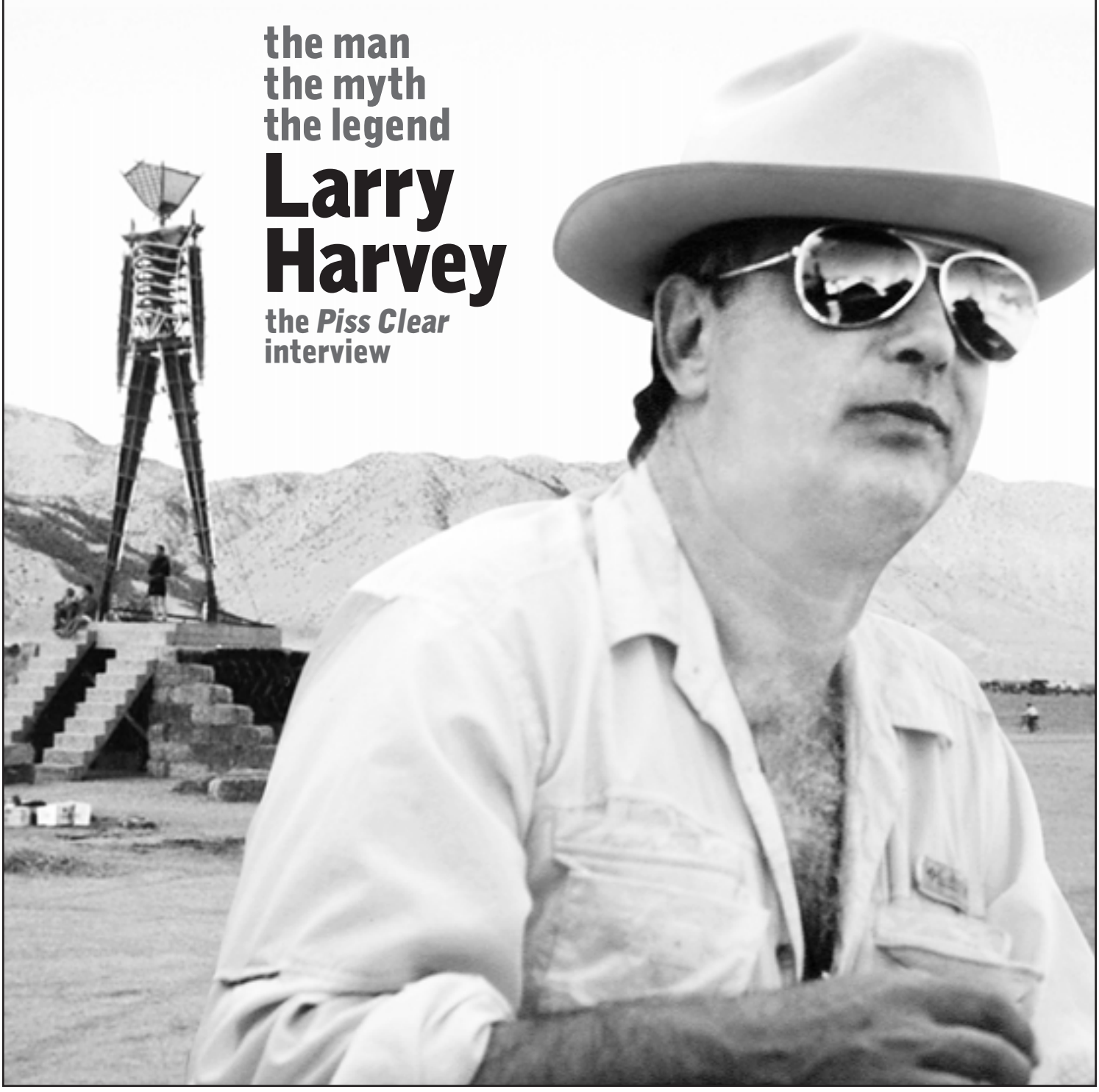
piss clear

Black Rock City's only alternative newspaper

the man
the myth
the legend

Larry Harvey

the *Piss Clear* interview



Larry Harvey photo by Stewart Harvey, Burning Man photo by Adrian Roberts

Black Rock City's only alternative newspaper

piss clear

wednesday
30 august 2000
issue ten
version 6.1

6:40 Brain,
Black Rock City,
Nevada

editor/art director/
publisher/figurehead
Adrian Roberts

staff astrologer/
assistant to the editor
Miz Deidre

distribution manager
Distribution Dick

transportation
Stewart McKenzie

instigator-in-chief/
assistant to Dan Bitter
PF

contributors
Rev."Blind Toaster"
Dr. Cliff
Godfrey Daniels
Danger Ranger
Miz Deidre
Distribution Dick
Bryan Finch
Gavin Heck
Dennis Hinkamp
Lenny Jones
The Judge
Erica Candy Kane
Mikey & Andy
Stewart McKenzie
Penfold
PF
Playa Kitten
Tokyo Rico

photographers
Julian Axolotl
Miz Deidre
Marc Geller
Stewart Harvey
Keith Phillips
Adrian Roberts

generously printed by
Waller Press
339 Harbor Way
South San Francisco,
California

pissclear@
blue-period.com

http://www.
blue-period.com/
pissclear

Piss Clear
1388 Haight Street
Suite 232
San Francisco, CA
94117

©2000
Adrian Roberts

adrian's rant

Miz Deidre

Once again, here we are, out on the playa — *Piss Clear,* in all our low-rent, low-maintenance, "we-just-pulled-up-in-a-rental-RV" glory. Look, I must confess: after eight years of doing this, it's really starting to feel like routine. Then again, that's not necessarily a bad thing.

By this point, we've got the whole "going to Burning Man" thing down. Like a science. And I would hope so, considering the number of times we've done this! This year, in fact, has been our most stress-free foray into the Black Rock Desert yet. Then again, we just got here. Ask us again in a few days.

I wish I could tell you that we've spent the past six months planning and preparing for this year's Burning Man, but that, of course, would be a lie. The truth of the matter is, half of us have been doing all we can just to muster up enough energy and enthusiasm to get our asses out here! It's not that we don't like coming to Black Rock City — we do — but sometimes it feels like the only reason we're here is to fulfill some sort of twisted sense of obligation.

"Gotta make the donuts..."

"I gotta put out the paper" has been my mantra the past few weeks. After all, Black Rock City has got to have its alternative newspaper — *especially* when the only other option is the propaganda-fueled *Black Rock Gazette,* as poor of an excuse as any for a newspaper. After all, if we didn't fight the good fight, who would? Why isn't anyone else publishing a newspaper to compete with the *Gazette*? Is it just because it's sexier to have a radio station instead?

I have to admit though, as this issue of *Piss Clear* came together, I did start to get excited for this year. Sure, you'll find a lot of snarky, cynical articles within these pages intimating how Burning Man isn't nearly as cool as it used to be, and how in fact, it's really starting to suck. But hey, come on! That's our job! We *have* to run articles like that! Otherwise, how else are we going to establish ourselves as "anti-establishment?"

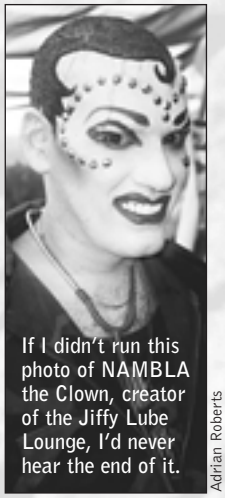
But really, who are we kidding? What *else* would we be doing on Labor Day weekend?

Why are we called *Piss Clear?*

Before I forget, I need get something out of the way. If you've been here before, you can skip the next paragraph, but if you're a Newbie, you're probably wondering one thing: Why the hell is this newspaper called *Piss Clear*? Isn't that a really dork-ass name?

Well, yes, you're absolutely right. It *is* a dork-ass name for a newspaper. But when we started a rumor last year about how we were going to change the name, so many people came up to us and implored us not to, that we decided to stick with it. Besides, we've got such a nice logo and all. Not to mention the fact that the title of our publication is meant as a constant reminder that while you're here in Black Rock City, you need to drink enough water so that you always *piss clear.*

See, we're just looking out for you.



If I didn't run this photo of NAMBLA the Clown, creator of the Jiffy Lube Lounge, I'd never hear the end of it.

Adrian Roberts

Hey, Larry likes us!

Besides, Larry Harvey likes the name of our newspaper as well — but he might just be saying that so that the *Black Rock Gazette* will continue to get all the media coverage. (Most mainstream media are squeamish about using the word 'piss.')

Oh yeah, Larry. Our cover boy. The grand poobah of Burning Man. And a pretty damn good interview, too, once you sift out all the rambling rhetoric, which we've done. I probably inhaled a month's worth of secondhand smoke during our two-hour chat, but it was well worth the risk to my health in order to bring you the interview that graces these pages.

The questions I asked Larry were solicited from *Piss Clear*'s varied staff of contributors, and amongst the queries, the two most popular were: "What's up with the Hat?" and "How much do you make?"

The answers to both can be found within, although the real answer to the latter question was told to me off the record. I *can* say this, however: rest assured, Larry Harvey's salary is considerably *less* than six figures, which seems to be the amount that so many Burning Man dissidents erroneously assume it to be.

But you know what? What if his salary was six figures? So what? If you ask me, Larry Harvey has every right to make as much money from Burning Man as he possibly can. Why? Because he earns it, *that's* why! Burning Man is *his* baby. He created it, he conceptualized it, and he helps keep it running year after year. This is what he does — this is his job. He has helped to create a successful, annual event out of essentially nothing — and he deserves to be compensated for his effort and hard work. If *you* came up with an idea for something that tens of thousands of people enjoy and benefit from, wouldn't *you* want to get paid for it? I thought so. Nice work if you can get it.

Work? Fuck that, we're on vacation!

Of course, here at *Piss Clear,* we don't really like work, which is why we can never be bothered with creating a theme camp or anything. Sure, two of us may be members of famed San Francisco glitz rock band **Blue Period**, and I'm often asked why Blue Period doesn't perform out here, or create a glittery glam rock theme camp or something. Geez, we publish a newspaper twice a week — isn't that enough? Besides, if we had a theme camp, then I'd be stuck running it all day — and who wants to do that? Especially when there's so much in Black Rock City to see! I'd much rather blunder around aimlessly on my fuzzy orange bicycle than be tied down to a theme camp.

SF glitz band Blue Period

Lisa Marie Barangan

Okay, that's kind of a lie. We actually *are* sort of affiliated with a theme camp this year — the fabulous **Jiffy Lube Lounge**, which is part of M*A*S*Hcara, located at **6:40 Brain**. It's supposed to be like a queer version of Bianca's Smut Shack (although I never particularly thought of Bianca's as necessarily "straight" — then again, when you're someone like me, it can get a little confusing).

I'll be doing hosting duties at Jiffy Lube periodically throughout the week, so if you see a gorgeous, glittery, fiery-haired creature of indeterminate gender, that's probably me. By all means, stop by and say hi!

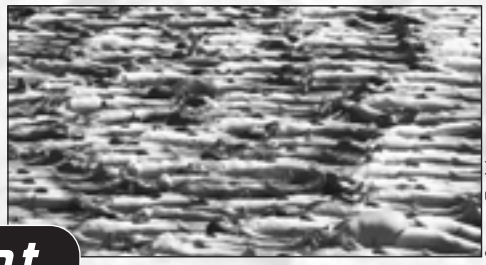
Our next issue comes out on Friday.

Until then, enjoy!

Last year sucked playa dust!

by the RIGHT REVEREND "BLIND TOASTER"

rant



Spencer Turnick

There I am, tenth row down, ninth from left

So Burning Man may be the only goddamned place left in the fucking world where more than five people can gather together without a fucking cell phone — which is a *good* thing. But lucky me! Last year, I got to sit next to some techno-chick at the oh-so-cool big burning of the Man and she has a freakin' walkie-talkie glued to her ear. And she's like, "Hey Sage, what's it like over on the other side of the Burn? It's like, weird over here. My sister didn't come with me because she's all 'I've had enough of those goddamn hippies and I'm just staying in my tent and X-ing-out all by myself tonight.' It's cool though, I'll talk to ya later."

Yeah, why don't you bring a *fax* machine with you next time!

Then, I went out to this "largest nude picture in the world" thing at 8 a.m. and it's 45 degrees out and my nuts have shrunk up to my armpits and this Spencer Turnip guy is all like "I'm a professional photographer from New York City and you all have to sign a photo release before I can take nude photos of you and sell them. What do you get? You get to be in my pictures. Oh yeah, and take off all your jewelry and hide your tattoos because I want this to be real natural." Yeah, like 2000 people are naturally in the desert all the fucking time! And I'm thinking, "Goddamn, I just drank five cups of coffee to make it here and you're making us stand around and there is no place to urinate. So there are 2000 of us lined up like concentration camp inductees heading for the showers and we're freezing. My bladder is bursting and there's a bunch of fat geeks in wind breakers on the sidelines trying to take pictures of the 2000 nude people because this is, like, the best thing they have seen since the *Baywatch* marathon on TV.

And what did I get from Turnip? Not even a fucking Christmas card! And my dick and 1,999 other people's genitals are on his web site.

And my camera? I had to get it tagged like it is some sort of pipe bomb or something. This year, I hear the media people are tagging tape recorders, sketchbooks, and diaries, and that they'll make every vehicle leaving Burning Man pass through a giant demagnetizer to make sure that you "leave without a trace" of any recorded memories.

But here I am, back again this year. I mean, fuck, if they're charging $200 a ticket, then it's gotta be good, right?

Frat boy go home

by THE JUDGE

advice

I hate frat boys.

Now, I'm not talking about individuals who join fraternities — I'm sure that the tradition of fraternal orders offers some unforeseen benefit to college students. Rather, I'm talking about the stereotypical frat boy. The guys with their baseball cap on backwards, drinking beer after beer after beer, who come to Burning Man thinking it's just like spring break at Daytona Beach. Well this isn't Daytona Beach any more than it's Woodstock. This is Black Rock City and we don't cater to those types of individuals 'round these parts.

Every year, places like Daytona Beach, Florida and Lake Havasu, Arizona are besieged by sex-crazed college students in their fervent effort to forget all things scholastic and concentrate on getting drunk and laid.

That is about the only similarity between the spring break areas and Black Rock City.

Look, everyone wants to get laid and escape reality for a little while, but out here on the playa, things are a little different. Out here, a big part of what makes this city (and event) so damn cool is the fact that it is not what most people expect. You ask anyone that has never been out here and I bet they think of it being this big rave out in the middle of nowhere. I bet you even thought that as well, didn't you? But once you're out here, you see that it is so much more.

So for all you new people that haven't had it pounded into your skulls as you drove through the gate, let me remind you of some key things to keep in your head:

This is not a place to forget the simple aspect of drinking more water than alcohol. But if you haven't had this edict ingrained into your cranium by this time, then you are probably not worth saving anyway. Go ahead, have another brew. Beer's mostly water, right?

This is not a rave in the sense that you can't just toss your empty water bottle on the ground and expect it to get picked up after the event by a bunch of cleanup crews. Mom ain't here. Pick up your goddamned trash!

This is not the place to be walking around without sunscreen, video camera around your neck shouting, "Show me your tits" to every female that walks by.

This is not *just* a rave. There is so much more to this place. Get out of the rave camps and check out some of the other stuff the city has to offer.

In short, this is an area that promotes free thinking and free expression in just about every conceivable form, but at the same time, this is not the place to be an irresponsible bonehead. It's important to take responsibility for your actions. The rule around here has always been "do whatever you want, so long as it doesn't infringe upon the rights of others" and that means if you walk around, looking at the entire event through a camera, swilling brewskies and tossing your garbage on the ground, you are infringing on my rights to have a good time here as well.

And I *really* don't like having my rights infringed upon.

BM 1999 vs. BM 2000

by ERICA CANDY KANE

Julian Axolotl / SuperSnail.com

Hello all you adorable people out here on the *glorious* playa. Life is all about ongoing growth, change, and adaptation. As a general philosophy, Erica believes that it is pointless to fight the inevitability of metamorphosis in the world. (Besides, it's a shame to wear the same outfit more than once, n'est pas?) She thinks those whiny folks who are always bellyaching about the way things used to be at Burning Man should find something better to do — like *dress up* or, even better, take pictures of Erica Candy Kane!

That said, here are some keen observations on BM '99 versus BM 2000:

Last year, there were no CELL PHONES. This year, you can have PHONE SEX at the drop of a hat.

Last year, people were FLIRTY. This year, they are downright HORNY (probably due to this year's "body" theme).

Last year, it was FUCKING FREEZING at night — full length furs were de rigeur. This year, you can RUN NAKED AT NIGHT and only experience a slight chill.

Last year, URANUS STREET was the name people snickered about immaturely. This year, ANUS STREET is the butt of jokes (pun intended).

Last year, BIANCA'S SMUT SHACK. This year, the JIFFY LUBE LOUNGE. 'Nuff said!

Adrian Roberts

▲ Last year, there were lots of cool LASERS all over Black Rock City. This year, who needs psychedelics? The nighttime LASERS are even better, rocking the playa long and hard.

Last year, BISEXUALITY ran rampant.
This year, BISEXUALITY runs rampant.

Last year, you needed a BIKE to get around.
This year, you need an ART CAR or motorized bed to see it all.

Last year, DJ CHRIST SUPERSTAR was a hit on the playa. This year, ALIEN SEX SHOW is the hot ticket.

Last year, there was an ICE CREAM TRUCK.
This year, there are SNO-CONE MACHINES.

Last year, the BURNING MAN sculpture was impressive. This year, the Burning Man's GENITALS are impressive.

I remember when this felt special

by an ANONYMOUS JOURNALIST

I took a break from Burning Man this year since my wife was eight months pregnant. Playa dust and childbirth probably don't mix. Just a hunch.

I actually grew to love Burning Man in the three years I attended. Here's how I saw it from a purely selfish and experiential point of view:

Year One left me pretty bedazzled, as I had never seen anything like it, and was invigorated by the rampant creativity and anarchy. Besides, I was working, and I had never covered such a fun story.

Year Two, my *Times* photographer pal Alan and I spent a good deal of time handmaking mirrored armor and wiring a tandem for lights, and felt like proper Black Rock City citizens — participants and not spectators. (Why does that now ring like a Scientology trope?)

Year Three, we sort of treated it like a beachfront stay, where the people-watching is simply a bit more interesting than in Venice Beach. Go, set up a few interesting structures, wear a few odd garments, take part in whatever entertaining games, shows and activities were offered, ingest a few amusing substances, make photos for ourselves, etc. Did a little cursory work with photos and video, and called it a good party. By now, Black Rock City was starting to feel like an actual place where we liked to hang out for a few days every summer — and thus, maybe it was no longer special nor energizing.

BM: still a Good Thing?

Keith Phillips

At that point, we had begun to burn out on it, and decided a hiatus would be no big deal.

From a purely sociocritical standpoint, it's not a Bad Thing. Burning Man is, in fact, probably a Good Thing, in that it gives license to people who perhaps feel otherwise restricted in life, inspiration to those who need an artistic kick in the ass, and solidarity to a terrific cultural melange of folks who probably feel somewhat isolated as individuals back in the "Real World."

On the other hand, the Burning Man organization has done a shitty job of keeping costs down. The ticket prices are now a fucking outrage, and the rules against people doing irresponsible shit to themselves are depressing and, frankly, anti-Darwinian — the whole thing is starting to feel a bit like a chaperoned picnic. I'm glad we're staying home in 2000, and I can't say my wife and I will want to bring our son out there in another few years if it's going to cost us $200 a head.

Bottom line: What a great, preposterous, holy mess of an idea. Thank god someone thought of it. Too bad this thing has gotten too big for its britches.

One last thing though. I miss cruising across the faceless surface of the desert to that "hidden," wide open, middle-of-nowhere playa site the first year I attended. The semi-permanent site now in the crook of Gerlach's armpit is almost meaningless, geographically speaking. There is little sacred grandeur to it, and no frisson of danger in that you can always hop on a bike and ride into town for ice, water or whatever other comestible you were stupid enough to forget. It's no more adventurous than camping in your backyard with a Halloween mask on.

haiku

Dust gets everywhere
Even in my underpants
I wish it would rain

The one thing I brought
That I wish I had forgot
Was diarrhea

When the sun goes down
And the wind begins
to blow
We'll sleep in a kite

Blowing dust and mud
Nude man with a
Prince Albert
An infected dick

Parasol gives shade
Your hazy noon-time
swagger
Dirt fashion runway

To take a shower
You must avoid the naked
Following the truck

Naked noon-time man
Riding your bike
so slowly
Is your ass on fire?

A razor booger
Is lodged up in my sinus
Please don't touch my nose

There is a small chance
While space-walking
the playa
You might get blown up

We're all neighbors here
Dusty un-asked-for
houseguest
Join us in our camp

Asleep in the dirt
When will the giant
dick fall
I guess not ever

— brought to you by Mikey & Andy

PLAN NOW FOR YOUR FINANCIAL FUTURE.

EVERY DAY AT NOON, AT THE FOOT OF THE MAN, THE BURNING MAN CORPORATION WILL HOST A ONE-HOUR INVESTMENT SEMINAR, FEATURING A DIFFERENT GUEST SPEAKER EACH DAY. TRANSCRIPTS OF EACH SEMINAR WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE THE FOLLOWING DAY AT THE ICE STATION.

THIS DAILY EVENT IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE BURNING MAN CORPORATION.